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Message Text

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15
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INFO OCT-01 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 AID-44 IGA-02 OMB-01 DODE-00

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APPROVED BY AID/SA:RNOOTER
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AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AORG (ICRC)
SUBJECT: INDOCHINA OPERATIONAL GROUP (IOG)
REF: GENEVA 6467
1. FOLLOWING BACKGROUND INFORMATION MAY BE HELPFUL FOR POSTS IN CONNECTION WITH STROH VISIT (REFTEL).

2. DURING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RED CROSS AT TEHRAN (NOV. 8-15) GVN DELEGATE LE VAN LOI ORGANIZED MEETING OF INDOCHINA RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES (GVN, GKR, RLG) TO DISCUSS COORDINATED POSITION WITH REGARD TO IOG PROGRAMS,
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WITH IDEA THAT INDOCHINA RED CROSS SOCIETIES SHOULD HAVE

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MORE SAY IN DETERMINATION OF PROGRAMS AND DISTRIBUTION OF IOG FUNDS. USDELOFFS MET WITH GROUP AT LOI'S REQUEST TO LISTEN TO DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT. LOI'S ENTHUSIASM FOR IDEA WAS NOT, HOWEVER, MATCHED BY GKR AND RLG REPRESENTATIVES, AND USDELOFFS CAME AWAY WITH IMPRESSION THAT NOT MUCH WILL COME OF THIS.

3. LOI ALSO SHARED WITH USDELOFF (SIEVERTS) GVN'S CONCERN ABOUT IOG'S POSSIBLE INTENTION TO HAVE AID DESINED FOR AREAS UNDER PRG CONTROL MOVED THROUGH SAIGON. LOI ACKNOWLEDGED GVN INITIALLY INDICATED THAT RED CROSS AID TO PRG AREAS MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, BUT STRESSED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS NOW FIRMLY

OPPOSED TO SUCH AID MOVING THROUGH SAIGON (OR OTHER GVN PORTS). HE ASKED USDELOFF TO MEET WITH STROH TO REVIEW THIS SUBJECT.

4. STROH READILY AGREED TO MEETING AND WAS WELL AWARE OF THE QUESTION. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE MAJOR CURRENT PROJECT FOR PRG AREA, A 250-BED FIELD HOSPITAL, WOULD BE SHIPPED VIA HAIPHONG AND DELIVERED TO PRG OFFICIALS IN NORTH VIET-NAM. STROH DID NOT KNOW IF IOG REPS WOULD BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SETTING UP THIS FACILITY AT ITS FINAL DESTINATION, WHICH HE PRESUMED WOULD BE IN AREA SOUTH OF 17TH PARALLEL, BUT THOUGHT ANY SUCH IOG PARTICIPATION WOULD ALSO BE HANDLED VIA HANOI.

5. STROH SAID IOG CONTINUED TO HOPE THAT SMALL PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY MEDICAL, FOR CIVILIAN VICTIMS IN PRG-CONTROLLED AREAS, MIGHT COME IN THROUGH SAIGON, ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT GVN COULD BLOCK THIS BY LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, ETC. USDELOFF POINTED OUT THAT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS TRADITIONALLY SEEKS TO AVOID POLITICAL CONFRONTATION IN ITS RELIEF PROGRAMS. IN SHIPPING FOOD RELIEF TO BIAFRAN ENCLAVE IN NIGERIA, FOR EXAMPLE, ICRC USED AIR ROUTES ACCEPTABLE TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. SIMILARLY IN VIET-NAM, PROJECTED AID TO AREAS UNDER PRG CONTROL SHOULD BE SENT THROUGH ACCEPTABLE CHANNEL, NAMELY VIA NORTH VIET-NAM, THE SAME SUPPLY ROUTE UTILIZED BY THE PRG
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ITSELF.

6. IN REPORT TO TEHRAN CONFERENCE, STROH EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR SUPPORT IOG HAD RECEIVED FROM WIDE RANGE OF GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING USG. LARGEST SINGLE GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTOR IS JAPAN, WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED OVER 13 MILLION SWISS FRANCS (4.4 MILLION). STROH SAID TOTAL CASH BUDGET FOR PRIORITY IOG PROGRAMS IS 62.7 SWISS FRANCS, OF WHICH

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39 MILLION SWISS FRANCS ALREADY RECEIVED OR FIRMLY PROMISED, LEAVING TOTAL OF 23.7 SWISS FRANCS LEFT TO RAISE. STROH SAID THIS FIGURE SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY 10 MILLION SWISS FRANC ESTIMATE TO COVER RISING PRICES AND CONINGENCIES, PLUS 32 MILLION FOR LONGER TERM PROGRAMS, FOR OVERALL TOTAL OF 65.7 SWISS FRANCS WHICH HE HOPES CAN STILL BE RAISED. HE INDICATED TO CONFERENCE THAT IOG WOULD BE MAKING RENEWED APPEALS TO GOVERNMENTS DURING COMING YEAR. IN CONVERSAION, USDELOFF STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF IOG PROVIDING REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES AS BASIS FOR FURTHER FUND-RAISING.

7. USDELOFF ALSO SUGGESTED STROH MIGHT WISH TO SEEK APPOINTMENT WITH AMBASSADOR MARTIN IN SAIGON DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT. DECONTROL 12/31/74 RUSH

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